



The History of A.T. Cross Company

A Family Business

The A.T. Cross Company is America's oldest manufacturer of writing instruments with a history that extends back for almost 170 years. The company was founded in Providence, Rhode Island in 1846 by Richard Cross, whose family boasted five generations of jewellers, originally hailing from the English Midlands. The first products made by the company were ornate gold and silver casings for wooden pencils. It has been suggested that the registration of the company took place at some point during or shortly after 1847, but the birth of Richard Cross' son, Alonzo Townsend, in 1846 represented its founding and gave the company its name, hence the earlier date.ⁱ Alonzo T Cross shared his father's passion for writing instruments and received his first US patent in 1876, by which time he had inherited the family business.



In 1916, employee Walter Boss purchased the company and his descendants remain key figures within the company today. Walter Boss was the company's top salesman and was offered the company by Alonzo Cross. Boss' history together with his talent in sales were a natural asset to the company and soon the Cross Company was being marketed from New York, in addition to boasting a larger and more colourful product range.

During the First World War, as was the case with many manufacturing companies, Cross became involved in the war effort by producing parts for the Army Signal Corps. Walter's sons, Ellery, Russell and Arthur, became more heavily involved in the company in the period after the war which saw significant growth in the writing instrument market, with Walter Boss' grandsons remaining key figures in the leadership of Cross today.

The Invention of the Stylographic Pen

The era into which the A. T. Cross Company was founded saw great change in the writing instrument industry. Many writers were still using quill pens or had recently made the transition to more durable dip pens made from a range of precious or durable metals. Cross' contribution to this period of pen evolution was the first stylographic pen, often cited as a technological ancestor of the ball point pen in 1879, less than a decade before Lewis Waterman invented the first commercially viable fountain pen.

The earliest surviving examples of fountain pens date from the start of the eighteenth century. The exact origins of the first fountain pen remain unclear and although the French royal instrument maker Nicholas Bion (1652-1733) makes reference to them in a treatise written by him in 1709, he was neither the inventor nor the patent holder for them.

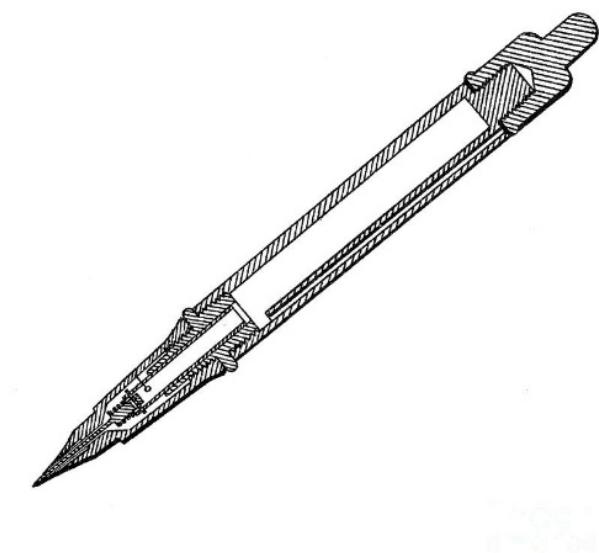
These early prototypes still made use of a quill nib until gold tipped nibs became more popular. Whilst it was beneficial for the writer to be spared from constantly having to dip the nib for ink, the first models were dogged with design flaws which invariably led to the ink leaking from the reserve. Early patents were issued to Baltimore shoemaker Peregrin Williamson in 1809 followed by John Scheffer in Britain in 1819. The first self-filling fountain pen was patented in 1813 by John Jacob Parker in 1813.

The design flaws that dogged the first generation of fountain pens were finally overcome by Lewis Waterman in 1883. In the decade that preceded Waterman's commercial success, Alonzo Cross had designed a reliable refillable ink pen, although the lack of a nib precludes the stylographic pen from being defined as a fountain pen.

The initial design was the concept of a Canadian druggist, Duncan McKinnon, who described the pen as an 'ink pencil'. The design received a patent in Canada and Great Britain in 1875 and in the United States the following year. McKinnon's greatest business error came when he left a sample of his pen with Alonzo Cross who was able to identify a simple modification, the addition of a spring, which would improve the pen's performance. Alonzo Cross received a US patent for his design in 1877 and the battle between McKinnon and Cross continued for several years.ⁱⁱ

Whilst Cross' patented design meant that there was now a reliable refillable ink pen on the market, in reality the nib of the fountain pen was more versatile whereas the stylographic pen suited the precision required in technical drawings, hence their alternative name: ink pencils. Cross secured a total of nine patents for these pens in his lifetime.

The design of the stylographic pen used a technology also key to the success of the fountain pen, namely capillary action. The tip of the stylographic pen was a very thin metal tube which housed an even finer wire which featured a spring at the end closest to the ink barrel. When the metal tube tip was depressed onto paper, the spring would compress allowing the even release of ink from the barrel to the tip. The snug fit of the wire within the tube prevented ink leakage but the size of the wire made it very susceptible to damage when the ink barrel was being refilled using an eyedropper.



Whilst the fountain pen proved more popular for the purpose of general writing, the stylographic pen was an effective partner for another innovation of the second half of the 19th century – carbon paper. The challenge to produce multiple copies of the same written text required a sturdy pen with a strong nib. Whilst many had favoured using a metal stylus for producing the original to be reproduced using carbon paper, the even ink flow of the stylographic pen was an obvious choice until the widespread introduction of the typewriter into businesses at the end of the 19th century.

The durability of the stylographic pen appealed to the US post office who insisted upon its use amongst its employees. Stylographic pens remained popular throughout the 20th century, especially for technical drawing which requires an extremely fine point but also one which produces a consistent ink line width regardless of how the pen is held by the writer. Whilst computer aided design has reduced the demand for stylographic pens, they are still manufactured in a range of sizes, the smallest of which has a stroke width of just 0.1 mm.

The Propel-Repel Mechanical Pencil

The difference between a conventional pencil and a mechanical pencil is the ability to extend and replace the graphite core, or 'lead' as it is commonly referred to. The earliest known example of a mechanical pencil was found aboard *HMS Pandora* which sank off the coast of Australia in 1791.ⁱⁱⁱ Over the next century a range of mechanisms were introduced including the addition of a spring to propel the lead.

A propel-repel mechanical pencil differs from a mechanical pencil in that it is possible to advance and also retract the lead. Alonzo Cross is credited with the invention of the first propel-repel mechanical pencil in 1879 which acted as the technological forerunner to today's modern mechanical pencil. Further patents were issued in the decade that followed, including a patent in 1885 which focused on the screw mechanism and the ability to expel the redundant lead when it needed replacing. In his lifetime, Alonzo Cross held 6 patents for mechanical pencils.

The Cross Fountain Pen

The first Cross fountain pens were manufactured in the 1930s. The Roaring Twenties had seen companies such as Waterman and Parker enjoying great commercial success following the introduction of celluloid into the fountain pen manufacturing process. This enabled a greater choice in colours and patterns for the pen barrel and resulted in a shift in the perception of the fountain pen from merely a writing instrument to a fashionable item that could reflect a person's individual preferences and style.



One of Cross' most successful fountain pens of the 1930s was an art deco pen which featured black enamel detailing and was made from gold and chrome. It was part of a set that featured a pencil that Cross expected to be the more popular, but the enduring appeal of a quality fountain pen in the 1930s won the popularity contest:

"The pen was supposed to play second fiddle to a co-released pencil, but instead it was the star of the set."^{iv}

Although Cross' history predates many of the other fountain pen manufacturers, the company does not list any new fountain pen launches between 1930 and 1982^v. It was the famous art deco pen first launched in 1930 that Cross chose to model the 150th Anniversary Limited Edition fountain pen on in 1996. In total, 10,000 writing instruments were produced in this range including a fountain pen, twist-action ball point pen and twist-action pencil. The fountain pen was priced at \$1000, with the ball point pen and pencil priced at \$500 each.



Cross and the Ball Point Pen

The 1940s was the decade that saw the launch of the first ball point pens amongst a storm of outrageous marketing claims and campaigns. Despite many comparisons being drawn between the Cross stylographic pen design and ball point pen technology, Cross, like Parker, chose not to release a ball point pen until 1953, which proved to be a sound business decision. By the end of the 1940s many of the ball point manufacturers had been forced to drastically reduce their prices and retract their unsubstantiated claims until the design and manufacturing process had evolved.

The most famous ball point boom and bust example of the 1940s was that of the Reynolds Company that brought the first ball point pens to North America. The Reynolds International pen went on sale on Monday 29th October 1945 for the sum of \$12.50, despite production costs of only 80 cents. On the first day of sales, more than 8000 pens were purchased, bringing in \$100,000 for Reynolds' company – close to \$1 million today. By February of 1946, four months after the launch of the first Reynolds ball point pen, he had made a profit of \$1.5 million.

By early 1947, there were more than 150 ball point pen manufacturers in North America but poor quality and a flooded market had driven the price down to less than a dollar. Just a year later, Milton Reynolds admitted defeat and retreated from the ball point business. Despite making a \$5 million profit, faulty pens and stiff competition together with consumer apathy with the ball point pen finally caught up with him.

Cross' first ball point pen was known as 'The Century', a 12 carat gold-filled model which featured a propel-repel twist mechanism. This was a unique selling point for the pen as this technology had not been seen in many previous models manufactured by other companies. As it was similar to the mechanism seen in Cross' mechanical pencils, the design lent itself to the marketing of ball point pen and pencil sets. Ellery Boss, son of Walter, received a US patent in 1954 for his modifications to the design of the internal workings of the ball point pen which featured a slimmer ink refill that could be more easily replaced.^{vi} The Century range is still available today and features many models including fountain pens.^{vii}

Cross embraces the Digital Age

The Cross Pad was introduced as a digital writing pad in collaboration with IBM in 1997, some 13 years before the Apple iPad was first launched. A team at the IBM Thomas J Watson Research Center designed the writing tablet as a platform for handwriting recognition software that they had spent many years developing.

The principle of the Cross Pad was simple – the user writes onto a standard A4 sized piece of paper and the Cross Pad Tablet beneath is able to capture the movements of the Cross Pad's pen, which contains a small radio transmitter. Using the handwriting recognition software, the handwritten text is translated into a word processed document that can be saved and printed.

The tablet was marketed as an unobtrusive note-taking device for meetings, where typing on a laptop might distract others. Whilst there were other pen computers available, many users were uncomfortable using a stylus and were seeking a lightweight alternative that felt more familiar. The Cross Pad could store up to 50 pages of text or drawings and also had the obvious advantage of producing an instant paper original which could be filed, recognising that the late 1990s was just the beginning of the era of the paperless office.



The handwriting recognition software that accompanied the Cross Pad required 30 minutes of training to ensure accuracy, regardless of the neatness of the user's handwriting. The partnership of IBM and Cross seemed ideal as Cross were recognised as a popular brand for writing instruments amongst business executives with many companies awarding branded Cross pens to salespersons meeting targets.

The Cross Pad was received positively by reviewers from the computing world:

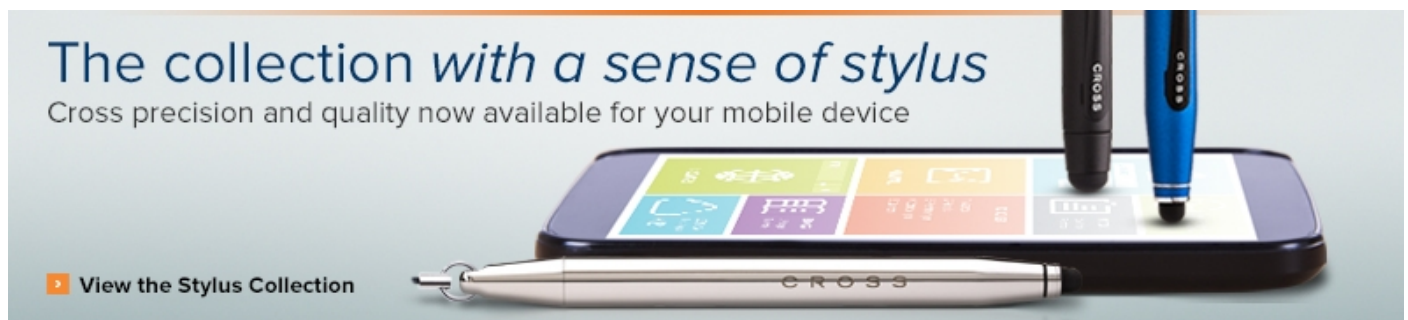
"The look of the product with its conventional 8.5 x 11" notepad generates immediate excitement and enthusiasm from anyone who sees it."^{viii}

Despite this enthusiasm, the Cross Pad was discontinued in 2004 in a decade where laptops became more popular alongside the Palm Pilot and other PDAs that preceded the smartphone generation.

Cross Today

Diversification beyond writing instruments began for Cross with the purchase of Mark Cross Inc., a leather goods company, in 1983. The product portfolio today includes a range of luxury executive items ranging from reading glasses to leather cases and wallets.

As with many manufacturers of writing instruments, Cross have acknowledged and embraced the digital age with a range of hybrid styluses suitable for use with mobile touchscreens. The styluses range from a slim line Tech 1 stylus to the Tech 3 which features a red editing pen, a pencil and ball point pen in addition to a stylus suitable for typing, swiping and tapping as required.



Cross today sell writing instruments in more than 140 countries around the world with subsidiaries in Canada, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, Spain, France, Germany and Holland.

The 170 year history of A.T. Cross epitomises a rare stability in modern times, from the pens which still boast similar signature designs from those manufactured more than a century and a half ago to the company headquarters that remain in the small town of Lincoln, Rhode Island.

ⁱ Information gathered from <http://www.collectorsweekly.com/pens/cross>

ⁱⁱ Information gathered from <http://www.richardspens.com/?page=ref/design/stylos.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ More information about this archaeological discovery can be found at the Queensland Museum's website located at <http://www.qm.qld.gov.au>

^{iv} Quotation taken from <http://www.collectorsweekly.com/pens/cross>

^v Cross' full product history is available at the company website located at http://www.cross.com/en/GB/CompanyInformation/ProductHistory.aspx?cat_name=Product_History

^{vi} US Patent 2753844

^{vii} An extensive collection of Cross pens are available to purchase from the Pen Warehouse located at <http://www.pens.co.uk/top-brands.php>

^{viii} Quotation taken from N Kleinman's Cross Pad Product Review published in *Pen Computing* and located online at <http://www.pencomputing.com/archive/PCM22/crosspad.html>

The History Of The Sheaffer Pen Corporation



Walter Sheaffer – A Spirited Entrepreneur

Walter Sheaffer was born in Bloomfield, Iowa on July 27th 1867. He was the son of a jeweller, Jacob Sheaffer, who had moved to Bloomfield from California where he had been unsuccessful in securing wealth during the gold rush of the 1848-1855. Despite this setback, Jacob established a successful jewellery business and was able to invest in the Bloomfield Insurance Company. A second dose of financial bad luck was heaped upon Jacob Sheaffer when the assets of the insurance company were lost as a result of the Chicago Fire in 1871. In order to pay his debts, Jacob Sheaffer had no choice but to sell his jewellery business.

Walter Sheaffer had an impressive work ethic and entrepreneurial streak from a very young age, seeking employment from the age of 12 whilst also studying to complete his high school education. His early occupations included running a peanut stand and working in a grocery store. Upon completing high school, Walter Sheaffer began his apprenticeships in the jewellery trade twenty miles from his home town, in Centerville and later in Unionville, Missouri, before returning to his father's newly re-established jewellery business.



Image of Sheaffer jewellery store

His father's business was struggling in the face of competition from newly established department stores that were able to offer items at a similar price to the cost paid by independent jewellers such as Sheaffer. Walter's innate sense of business led him to advise his father against competing with these larger stores

and instead to diversify into the high end of the watch market. Walter's plan paid off resulting in a turn-around of the finances of the Sheaffer jewellery store.

Once Walter Sheaffer married and started his own family, the store faced greater financial strain as it was now supporting two families. Walter established a side business, selling pianos and organs. His determination to make sales was admirable and often saw him lugging a piano to potential customers twenty miles outside of the town and subsequently offering to assist the customer with household or farming duties in exchange for the opportunity to demonstrate the piano afterwards.ⁱ

By the end of 1906, Walter Sheaffer was in a position to purchase his own jewellery shop and it was the following year that he developed his design for a self-filling fountain pen.

Self-Filling Pens – Sheaffer's Opening Act

The first commercially successful fountain pen had been designed by Lewis Waterman in the late 1880s. This pen, together with others designed in the decades that followed, required filling with a glass eye dropper that placed the ink directly into the barrel of the pen. This process could be messy and the race was on to design a filling system that did not risk spillages or leaks either during or after the filling process.

Image of eye dropper used in fountain pen



The development of a rubber sac as a container for the ink within the barrel was the first step in the process towards a cleaner self-filling mechanism; with the real breakthrough coming with Conklin's crescent filler that was invented at the turn of the 20th century.

Conklin's design featured a slim bar fitted within the barrel of the pen that rested on the rubber sac. Attached to this bar, and protruding through the barrel was a crescent shaped bar that would be depressed by the writer, whilst the nib was placed into the ink bottle. The compressed rubber sac would then draw up the ink as the crescent was released. Whilst there had been some previous attempts at

similar filling mechanisms before, Conklin's was vastly superior due to a locking feature that prevented the crescent being accidentally depressed whilst the pen was in use.

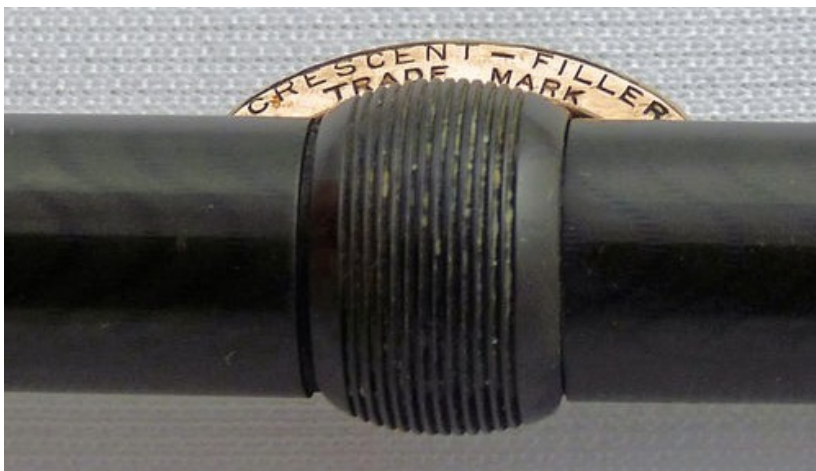


Image of Conklin's crescent filler

The crescent filler was a significant advancement but Walter Sheaffer felt that there was still room for further improvement and his lever filling system was patented in August 1908. In the place of Conklin's crescent, Sheaffer installed a lever which fitted into a built-in recess of the pen's barrel ensuring a more comfortable holding position for the writer and a more streamlined appearance.



Image of Sheaffer's lever filler

When the pen required refilling, the lever was lifted and this action caused the internal pressure bar to depress the rubber ink sac. A further improvement to the design in 1912 provided the impetus for Walter Sheaffer to make the permanent leap from jewellery into pen production. This filling mechanism was so popular that it was adapted by many other manufacturers who were able to exploit technical loopholes in the US patent for Sheaffer's original design.

Early Success

Walter Sheaffer joined together with George Kraker and Ben Coulson, who were both former salesmen for Conklin, and the W.A Sheaffer Pen Company was incorporated in 1913 for \$35,000 and in its first year of trading, the newly formed corporation had earnings of \$17,000 (or approximately \$403,000 today).

By 1917, Sheaffer had purchased the Fort Madison Plow Company buildings to enable the establishment of an extensive factory capable of producing parts, such as the gold nibs, that previously had to be obtained from suppliers across the United States. In the four years since incorporation, Sheaffer were now producing 100,000 pens annually.

Sheaffer's Key Innovations

A Pen for Life

In 1920, Sheaffer introduced the Lifetime pen which came with a lifetime guarantee and an \$8.75 price tag (the equivalent of approximately \$100 today). This compares with the Parker Duofold introduced a year later, with a 25 year guarantee and a \$7 price tag. Whilst there were fountain pens available at just a third of the price of the Lifetime pen, Walter Sheaffer believed that a customer would always choose the best quality pen that he could afford with the money available to him. This philosophy proved accurate and the popularity of the Lifetime pen quickly grew with it soon becoming the bestselling pen in the United States.

A Writing Fluid rather than an Ink

In 1922, Sheaffer developed Skrip, which was described as a writing fluid rather than an ink. Many fountain pen users made negative associations with the word 'ink' as many inks available at the time had a corrosive effect on the workings of the fountain pen. Skrip described itself as the 'successor to ink' ⁱⁱ and claimed to be less damaging as it used aniline dyes, originally used to stain wood and as a fabric dye, and now a common feature in the chemistry of many modern fountain pen inks. The design of the Skrip bottle was also very popular as it contained its own ink well, enabling the writer to refill their pen whilst minimising the mess.



Image of skrip bottle



Breaking the Mould – From Hard Rubber to Radite

Most fountain pens in the first two decades of the 20th century looked remarkably similar due to the limits of the material used; namely black hard rubber which could only be produced in either red or black.

In 1924, Sheaffer produced a line of pens manufactured from *radite*. This material, which is also known as cellulose nitrate or celluloid had a distinct advantage over its predecessor, in that it was possible to produce it in a wide range of colours, including pens made from a combination of swirling colours. The first colours to be produced by Sheaffer were jade green and solid black and within two years, Sheaffer had ceased using hard rubber in its manufacturing process. These first plastic pens were an immediate hit with customers who appreciated the wide range of colours available that could reflect something of the individual writer's personality. One drawback of the wonder material, not discovered until decades later, was that the plastic barrel could be discoloured over time from gases that slowly seeped from the rubber ink sacs held within.



Image of Sheaffer radite pen from late 1920s

Sheaffer's famous White Dot

In the same year as Sheaffer launched its new radite pens, the signature trademark of the White Dot was introduced. This branding was originally added to pens to indicate that they had a lifetime guarantee. The position of the White Dot has changed over the decades of production, to accommodate changes in the raw materials used in manufacturing as well as design changes necessary to conform to military uniform regulations. Pens were a common gift sent to loved ones serving during the Second World War and the position of the pen clip on Sheaffer pens meant that the pens could not be worn in the shirt pocket.

Sheaffer recognised the potential customers that this could dissuade from making a Sheaffer pen purchase and so changed the position of the cap and White Dot on certain models which were then

marketed directly at those in the military. It was also during the Second World War that the nature of the lifetime guarantee changed, covering only the nib of the pen, rather than the pen in its entirety.

Sheaffer Balance – a new design concept

The Sheaffer Balance pen was introduced in 1929 and had a unique feature in that it was shaped more like a torpedo rather than a uniform cylindrical shape which was the common shape seen across most manufacturers. The concept of streamlining was also beginning to feature in architectural circles, popular amongst designers such as Raymond Loewy and Norman Bel Geddes.ⁱⁱⁱ Pens prior to the development of the Balance had the majority of its weight at the back end of the pen. This meant that the nib of the pen instinctively lifted away from the paper and could place a strain on the writer's hand. The weight in the Balance pen, as the name suggests was centred and this allowed for a more comfortable writing grip with this design feature at the heart of the marketing campaign; this was an ergonomic and comfortable pen for the writer, as well as looking good. This shape proved to be so popular that the term 'balance' became synonymous with this shape for any fountain pen, regardless of its manufacturer.

Touchdown pneumatic filling system & snorkel



Sheaffer's expertise in fountain pen filling systems was once again evident with the development of the Touchdown pneumatic filling system which was introduced in its high end fountain pens in 1949. This was a very successful and robust vacuum filling mechanism which compressed the ink sac using air pressure from a plunger tube. Small holes permitted the pressure to be released and subsequently the sac would re-inflate, drawing in ink at the same time, when the plunger reached the end of the tube. This filling system remained in place until 1963 and was still manufactured until the 1990s.

The development of the touchdown led to the invention of the Snorkel pen in 1952. The Snorkel resembled the needle of a medical syringe which extended from under the nib when the end cap was rotated. The writer would submerge this needle into the ink bottle when refilling to prevent the nib having to make contact with the ink; a measure to reduce mess and waste whilst refilling. Its development was shrouded in secrecy and was launched with the most extensive marketing campaign in the history of the company. The Snorkel enjoyed success until the end of the 1950s.

Enduring Success

In 1928, The Sheaffer Pen Corporation was launched on the New York Stock Exchange, by which time

the company held a quarter of the American pen market, sharing this position with the other big brands of the time; namely Parker, Waterman and Wahl-Eversharp. Whilst all of the major pen manufacturers experienced great success in the first two decades of the 20th century, Sheaffer's growth was five times that of its rivals.^{iv}

Despite the Stock Market Crash of October 1929 and the start of the Great Depression, Sheaffer continued to experience success with marked improvements in sales figures throughout the 1930s and the opportunity to reward employees with bonuses as part of Sheaffer's profit sharing scheme.

Whilst it could be said that the impact of the Great Depression on Sheaffer was limited as many of their pens were luxury items, it is important to note that Sheaffer did not forget the customer with less money to spend;

"Sheaffer's philosophy was this; if someone could only afford a \$1 pen then he was entitled to buy the best pen he could for that sum, even if it meant lower profits or even a loss for the company."^v

Whilst it was important that all customers were pleased with the quality of the Sheaffer pen they had purchased, Walter Sheaffer knew that it was better to sell one \$10 pen than ten \$1 pens as it was the more expensive pens that generated brand loyalty and the most positive impression in the marketplace.

Shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, Walter Sheaffer was succeeded by his son Craig as president of the company. Craig was tasked first with navigating Sheaffer through the manufacturing diversification that affected many of the writing instrument companies who were needed for the production of military equipment as part of the war effort. Following the war, and shortly after the death of his father, Craig Sheaffer committed to maintaining pre-war prices to encourage and support both customers and the economy back into growth.



By 1951, Craig Sheaffer was in a position to consolidate the 3 manufacturing plants in Fort Madison, Iowa with the construction of one expansive headquarters at a cost of \$2.5million. By the following year, the company sales figures were in the region of \$25 million (close to \$216 million today). 1951 also saw the manufacture of the 50 millionth Sheaffer pen.

C Sheaffer & employee with 50 millionth pen

Sheaffer & the Ball point pen

Milton Reynolds launched the first ball point pen in the United States in October 1944. Whilst Reynolds had little experience of pen design or manufacture, Sheaffer's reputation had led to their involvement in the ball point pen design process some months before Reynolds' launch. The War Department contacted Sheaffer requesting some prototypes of ball point pens that would be suitable for military use, following the success of the pens in the British Royal Air Force.

Whilst the War Department were not satisfied with the first prototypes, Sheaffer were ready to launch their first ball point pen for sale in September 1946. The *Stratowriter* series were priced between \$12.50 and \$67.50 and were brought to the market at a time when the number of pen manufacturers in the United States was growing at a phenomenal rate. By the end of the 1940s more pens were being manufactured each year than people lived in the United States and there were three times as many pen manufacturers as had been in business before the arrival of the ball point pen.^{vi} The popularity of the ball point pen was short lived as many failed to live up to their extravagant marketing promises and equally extravagant price tags.

Despite consumer apathy with the ball point pen, the *Stratowriter* series continued in production until the early 1950s when it was replaced with a wider range of models including the *Skripriter*. By this time, production techniques and ink recipes had improved sufficiently to enable greater reliability and lower costs. Whilst many pen manufacturers ventured into the disposable ball point pen market, Sheaffer continued to produce a range of pens and refills as well as ball point pens as part of gift sets sold alongside mechanical pencils and fountain pens.

Sheaffer as a Global Brand

After more than 50 years as a family business, Sheaffer was sold to Textron Inc, in 1966. Textron began as a small textiles company in the 1920s and is a multibillion dollar conglomerate today which includes brands such as Cessna and Bell Helicopters. Textron merged Sheaffer with Eaton, another stationery firm in 1976, before selling the company to Gefinor in 1987

Gefinor were a Swiss merchant banking company who saw that the potential of Sheaffer Eaton had been somewhat neglected during its time as part of the Textron group. Investment was made in the creation of a new line of luxury fountain pens which would suit the European market more so than the American market. Whilst many of these pens were priced between \$75 and \$175, there were also more expensive writing instruments such as a solid gold Masterpiece pen which sold for \$4000 in the early 1990s.

After ten years as part of the Gefinor group of companies, Sheaffer was sold in 1997 to Bic, who were looking to improve their reputation in the luxury pen market. This acquisition by Bic was not as straightforward as previous sales, due to an attempted buyout from within the company. A group of Sheaffer executives determined that they had the right to first refusal on any sale of the company, but this

was not judged to be the case when the matter was taken to court. Soon after the Bic acquisition, the process of moving operations overseas and away from the famous Fort Madison, Iowa site began. This site finally closed in 2008, although it has been suggested that the original date for the plant closure was 2006, but there had been a difficulty in finding a suitable operation capable of the manufacturing of Sheaffer's famous inlaid nibs.^{vii}



The 'Big Four' American pen companies had now all succumbed to takeovers with Parker sold to Gillette in 1993, Waterman in a reverse merger with Bic in the 1950s and Wahl Eversharp being acquired by Parker in 1957 and ceasing production in the 1960s.

The closure of the Sheaffer Iowa plant marked the end of an era as it was the last of the big American fountain pen manufacturers to produce pens on home soil.

Image of the fort Madison site

The Sheaffer Legacy

Sheaffer is extremely popular as a fountain pen brand amongst collectors due to its ready availability and wide range of products to suit all price brackets. The most collectible Sheaffer pens include Balance pens manufactured during the 1920s and 1930s as well as the Pen For Men models manufactured in the 1950s. Whilst the Balance came in a huge range of colours, many experienced discolouration due to gases emitted by the rubber in the sac mechanism. If it is possible to find a Balance pen in a colour that was most susceptible to this discolouration (such as Jade or Pearl) and yet remained in good condition, this would also provide much excitement amongst collectors.^{viii}

Sheaffer continues to enjoy a reputation as a manufacturer of quality luxury pens with a net annual income of \$36 million and 250 employees worldwide. A number of the pen ranges that feature in the Sheaffer catalogue today are based on the early models whose endurance in the marketplace echoed the spirit and determination of the company's founder, Walter Sheaffer.

ⁱ This anecdote is described in the *History of Sheaffer* article located at: <http://www.sheaffertarga.com> Its author cites that

ⁱⁱ Taken from http://dirck.delint.ca/beta/?page_id=4062

ⁱⁱⁱ According to Richard Binder in his article, *Profile: Sheaffer's Balance* located at <http://www.richardspens.com/?page=ref/profiles/balance.htm>

^{iv} Statistic taken from <http://www.answers.com/topic/sheaffer-pen-corporation>

^v Quotation taken from *History of Sheaffer* article located at: <http://www.sheaffertarga.com>



A History Of The Parker Pen Company

The Transition from Feather to Fountain

After more than ten thousand years of feather-driven script, the first pens that held their own ink supply were invented. The earliest surviving examples of fountain pens date from the start of the eighteenth century. The exact origins of the first fountain pen remain unclear and although the French royal instrument maker, Nicholas Bion (1652-1733) makes reference to them in a treatise written by him in 1709, he was neither the inventor nor the patent holder for them.

These early prototypes still made use of a quill nib until gold tipped nibs became more popular. Whilst it was beneficial for the writer to be spared from constantly having to dip the nib for ink, the first models were dogged with design flaws which invariably led to the ink leaking from the reserve. Early patents were issued to Baltimore shoemaker, Peregrin Williamson in 1809 followed by John Scheffer in Britain in 1819. The first self-filling fountain pen was patented in 1813 by John Jacob Parker in 1813.

The fountain pen design flaws were finally addressed and resolved by Lewis Waterman in 1884 when he modified the design to include three grooves within the feed mechanism as well as an air hole in the nib. Waterman's journey to successfully patenting the design for the first modern fountain pen was born out of frustration at the inadequacies of the pens available at the time. Waterman was a salesman and lost a valuable new customer when a sales contract was ruined by a leaking fountain pen.

George Safford Parker



The founder of the Parker Pen Company, a contemporary of Lewis Waterman experienced the same frustrations. He was a telegraphy teacher and like Waterman his entrance into the pen market came from the desire to find a pen that was fit for its purpose. In addition to teaching telegraphy, George Safford Parker sold pens on behalf of the John Holland Pen Company. As a natural and gifted salesman, Parker agreed to make any necessary repairs to pens that he had sold and he was soon astounded at

the sheer volume requiring his services. In addition to learning a great deal about pen manufacturing, Parker soon realised that a better pen design was needed and in 1888 he established the Parker Pen Company in Janesville,



Wisconsin. Within a year, George Safford Parker had manufactured his first pen and by 1891 he had secured \$1000 of investment from W F Palmer to successfully launch his business.

Early Parker Innovations

In 1894, George Parker had his first big success in innovation with the creation of the Lucky Curve ink feeding system. This product proved to be the key to Parker's success in an emerging market of many new companies and pens. Using capillary action, the Lucky Curve ink feeding system drained ink back into the reservoir within the pen when it was upright. This resulted in fewer ink spills for the user and the system continued to be used in Parker pens until the late 1920s.



By the turn of the century, two further innovations brought success to the Parker Pen Company with the introduction of an outer cap that slipped onto the pen as well as a 'jointless' pen which was another invention aimed at lessening the leaking ink factor that dogged so many pen users. The Parker Jointless pen had succeeded in combating leaks at the screwed joint found in most pens of the time, as the nib fitted much like a cork in a bottle.

The potential for mess when filling the fountain pen was also an issue that Parker sought to address with the development of a 'button filler' in the first decade of the 20th century.

Prior to this time, a fountain pen would be refilled with ink using an eyedropper which would be dispensed directly into the barrel of the pen. The button filler disposed of the need for a separate filling device as the barrel of the pen contained an ink sac. The user simply had to remove a small cap from the end of the pen and place the nib directly into the ink bottle. When the button under the small cap was depressed and released, ink would be drawn into the ink sac concealed within the barrel. This innovation was highly successful and led to many variations manufactured by contemporaries of Parker.

Not satisfied with just reducing ink leakage from the pen, the Parker Company turned to the nature of the ink itself to improve its drying time on the paper thus eliminating the need for blotting. Quink Ink was launched in 1931 after a 3 year

and \$68,000 research investment. Whilst the ink did eradicate the need for blotting, it was also strongly alkaline which caused corrosion in some pens, ultimately leading to the invention of Parker's most successful fountain pen, The Parker 51, in 1941 which was made from Lucite rather than Permanite.

The Key Parker Models

In addition to innovations in pen components and technology, the Parker Pen Company earned a reputation for designing high quality and stylish pens that appealed to the discerning pen user. This reputation ensured that Parker Pens remained as one of the top two companies for sales of writing instruments worldwide between the 1920s and 1960s. Parker invented and released countless models during this time with the three most famous and successful being the Duofold, Parker 51 and the Parker 45.

1921 – Parker Duofold

The launch of the Parker Duofold was the largest and most significant so far in the Parker Company's thirty year history. It was nicknamed the 'Big Red' and epitomised the roaring twenties and it had a \$7 price tag (equivalent to \$90 today) which also made it the most expensive fountain pen on the market. The Duofold also came with a 25 year guarantee. In 1923, the Duofold pencil and Lady Duofold were introduced and within four years of its launch the Duofold had helped to quadruple company sales.



By 1926 a new durable form of plastic, known as Permanite, was available and the Duofold (previously made from vulcanised rubber) was re-launched. The durability of the new pens was highlighted with outrageous stunts including drops made from airplanes and drops into the Grand Canyon. The Duofold is still manufactured by Parker and has seen many limited editions celebrating occasions such as the centenary of the company in 1988 and the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002.

1941 – Parker 51

The Parker 51 earned its name as it was created 51 years after the launch of the Parker Pen Company. It earned a number of design awards for its cigar shape and hooded nib and was the result of a \$250,000 research investment by the company. In its thirty years of manufacture the Parker 51 made more than \$400 million of sales making it the most widely used fountain pen in history. It was made from Lucite rather than Permanite which was resistant to the corrosion caused by the alkali nature of many new inks such as Quink and later Superchrome ink. A cheaper version of the 51, known as the Parker 21 was introduced in 1948 and this quickly earned more than 60% of the over \$5 market for the Parker Company.



1960 – Parker 45



Four years after Parker released the Parker 61 which was the first self-filling fountain pen, the Parker 45 was launched. The unique feature of the Parker 45, named after the famous pistol, was its use of an ink cartridge. The design was based on a pen previously made by the Eversharp Company whom Parker had acquired in 1957, as an attempt to expand into the lower end of the ball point pen market. The Parker 45 was not intended as an expensive model and was marketed as

a school pen, appealing to children who would like the novelty and parents who would appreciate the reduced risk of messy ink spills.

Parker Pens and the History Books

The success of the Parker Pen Company is not only evident in its innovations but in the endorsements from discerning and distinguished writers. Within the first thirty years of the company, Parker pens were the chosen writing instrument for Puccini's *La Bohème* in 1896, Arthur Conan Doyle's later Sherlock Holmes works in the first two decades of the 20th century as well as George Bernard Shaw's play, *Pygmalion* in 1912.

George Safford Parker was also able to adapt his product range to the changing times and needs of consumers. This was seen in the commercial success of the 'Trench' pen which was invented in 1916 to address the needs of soldiers fighting during the First World War. Small pellets of black pigment were stored in the pen's barrel and when these were mixed with water in the pen's cap,



ensured that soldiers had sufficient ink supply whilst in the trenches. A contract was awarded to the Parker Pen Company by the U.S. War department for sale of the trench pen to soldiers in Europe and this secured financial stability for the company during the austerity of the wartime period.

The decade following the end of the First World War saw the United States enter the Great Depression with many businesses facing financial ruin. Unlike many of its rivals, the Parker Pen Company chose not to devalue its most successful pen models which had experienced success at the high end of the market. In an additional response to the challenges of the depression, Parker began production of an economic model especially for school students in 1932. These pens received no advertising or marketing and were not even given a name by the company. They are known by collectors today as Thrift Time or Depression pens and are another example of the adaptability of the Parker business philosophy.

During the Second World War, many large manufacturing premises were used as part of the war effort and the Parker Pen Company in Wisconsin was no exception. Parker saw the shortage of materials for the vital components of their bestselling pen of the time, the Parker 51, as yet another marketing opportunity and the advertisements of the time urged customers to prepare for a shortage;

“ 'We must state that there will not be enough "51's" to go around this year. Government orders have curtailed all pen production.' Nevertheless, Parker



suggested that if you needed a new pen for 'wartime work,' such as 'writing letters of encouragement to some spunky lad in the armed services,' then you should trot right down to your dealer and reserve a "51".'¹

This marketing ploy paid high dividends with many consumers waiting avidly for their \$12.50 Parker 51 to become available once the war had ended. By the end of its production in 1972, the Parker 51 had yielded more than \$400 million for the company.

The ending of the Second World War was also significant for the Parker Pen Company with General Dwight D Eisenhower using his Parker 51 to sign the armistice signalling the end of the European front in 1945. Later the same year, General Douglas MacArthur signed his name to the Japanese surrender document on the deck of the USS Missouri with his 20 year old Parker Duofold.

Following the end of the Second World War and the Cold War era, the United States and the Soviet Union began a new rivalry in the space race. The Parker Pen Company again enjoyed a prominent position in a number of the landmark moments in this period of history. In 1972, President Nixon gave two titanium Parker 75 pens to the President of the People's Republic of China. These contained traces of lunar dust that had been brought back by the astronauts of the Apollo mission. During the NASA Discovery Shuttle Mission in November 1984, a number of engraved Parker Classic pens were taken into space and these were later given as commemorative gifts. The following year, President Ronald Regan presented the President of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev with a Parker Premier desk set as a commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Apollo –Soyuz Space Mission.



The prominence of the Parker Pen name was not only seen in the United States and in 1962 a Royal Warrant was awarded to the company by the British Royal Household indicating Parker as their only supplier of pens and inks. This close relationship continued with Parker celebrating Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee in 2002 with

the release of two commemorative pens. The first was a 23 carat gold plated Duofold pen, engraved with an extract from the Proclamation of the Accession. Parker produced 2500 of these pens with the first one presented to the Queen

herself. In the same year, Parker also produced a special design of the Sonnet pen in a royal purple finish with a 23 carat gold plated cap and commemorative text engraving.

Parker and the Ball Point Pen

The Parker Pen Company began research into ball point pens in the 1940s but saw the failures of many of the earliest models made by other companies on the market and waited until it was able to produce a pen that was robust enough to merit the Parker name. In 1950, Parker produced the Hopalong Cassidy Ball Point Pen. It was a novelty 98c ball pen, but the company memo made it clear to the sales team that whilst it was a ball point pen made by the Parker Pen Company, it was not a Parker ball point pen. It seems that Parker wanted to test the water with this product with-



out risking the Parker name if it was not a success. Parker recognised the Hopalong as a pen in equal standing to the other ball points available on the market at this time, but did not consider it worthy of the Parker name.

Prior to this time, Parker made it clear that they were not in the business of making ball point pens at all. Kenneth Parker responded to a Time Magazine article in June 1946;

“Parker... doesn’t have a ball point in its stable of products because it doesn’t want one.... If and when we bring out a ball point it won’t resemble anything now on the market.” ⁱⁱ

The ball point market boom of 1946 was in strong decline through to 1950 when a slow recovery began, starting with the improved quality pens of the Papermate Company in 1951. Sales of ball points had risen from virtually nothing in 1950 to \$40 million in 1953 and \$48 million by the start of 1954. The unit sales figures for this time frame show the rise more dramatically with 50 million pens sold in 1951 and 150 million by 1954. By 1953, sales of ball point pens were finally overtaking sales of fountain pens and the shaky start of companies such as Reynolds were a distant memory.

By the autumn of 1953, the Parker Pen Company was ready to begin its contribution to the ball point market and launched Operation Scramble, an attempt to put the Jotter pen into production in just ninety days. The features of the

Jotter pen which sold for \$2.75 included non-smearing, fast-drying ink that was acid neutral and so would not cause damage to the nib unlike some fountain pens. It had a smooth ball bearing tip with a stainless steel cap and nylon barrel, available in a range of colours. The pen could be purchased with red, green, blue or black ink in addition to having a variety of point sizes to suit individual writing preferences. Most pen refills at the time held 0.5g of ink whereas the Jotter held 1.6g equating to an extra 393,000 words or forty five to seventy hours of writing.

Despite all of these technological and stylistic advances, the Parker Company were still nervous about the Jotter, aware of the damage that a poor quality pen could have on a company, such as Eversharp had experienced in 1946. Kenneth Parker opted not to include the famous Arrow sign on the Jotter, believing that it failed to be a commercial success, it would not be obvious that it was a Parker pen.



The first recipients of the Jotter were the company's 1600 employees in January of 1954. The original selling price was listed at \$2.75 (\$23.50 today) but demand led to an increase of 20 cents by March 1954. The following month, 100,000 pens were shipped to New York and by June 1954, the first Jotter pens were sold in Europe. Parker estimated that by the end of 1954 it would sell 4.5 million Jotters.

Further design features were evident in the launch of the T Ball Jotter in 1957 which included a sintered ball comprised of 5 million metal particles in a one millimetre ball. This tiny ball could hold 167 times more ink than its predecessors and was able to cut glass with a compressive strength of half a million pounds per square inch. The T Ball Jotter's introductory price was just \$1.95 and within six months of its launch, five million pens had been manufactured. By 1984 more than 400 million T Ball Jotters had been sold.

In 2013, the Parker Pen Company celebrates its 125th anniversary with pens currently sold in more than 120 countries. Its ownership transferred to Gillette for \$450 million in 1993 and then in 2000 to the Newell Rubbermaid Company where it currently trades under their stationery division, Sanford which is based in Chicago, Illinois. The Sanford portfolio is the largest in the stationery market

and includes brands such as Papermate, Sharpie, Waterman and Reynolds.

The key to the success of the Parker Pen Company can be attributed to many factors including its innovation and determination to remain loyal to producing quality products, despite the many historical and financial challenges of the twentieth century. George Safford Parker's bold decision to venture to foreign markets within fifteen years of founding the company may also have played its part together with the many prolific figures that have chosen Parker as their preferred writing instrument. Perhaps the answer lies in the simple words of George Safford Parker himself who is believed to have said;

"If I make a better pen, people will buy it." ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ Quotation taken from Parker Advertisements in Floyd Stuart's article *War and the Fountain Pen* located at <http://www.richardspens.com/?page=ref/floyd/pigtails.htm>

ⁱⁱ K Parker, quoted by H Gostony & S Schneider, 1988, *The Incredible Ball Point Pen – A Comprehensive History and Price Guide*, p36.

ⁱⁱⁱ Quotation taken from article located at <http://www.internet-ink.co.uk/Parker-Pen-History/Parker-Pen-History.htm>





A History Of The Waterman Pen Company

Early attempts to create a pen that held its own ink

The transition from mark making on surfaces such as clay with a pointed stylus to the use of ink and pen is believed to have begun at least 4000 years ago. The Romans developed an ingenious method for delivering ink to the page with the invention of a primitive fountain pen. A piece of reed from marsh grasses or bamboo was cut to form a nib at one end and the stem was filled with ink. The writer could dispense the ink to the nib of the reed pen by squeezing the reed. What is not recorded in the history books is to what extent this early reservoir pen leaked or spoiled would-be papyrus masterpieces.

There is also documentary evidence of an early prototype of a reservoir pen developed in the Middle East in the 10th century AD. It is recorded in Kitab-al-Majalis wa 'I-musayarat written in 953 that the caliph of the Maghreb, Ma'ad al-Mu'izz insisted on a pen that could be trusted not to stain his clothes or his hands. The text continues that such a pen was provided and that it could be held upside down without leaking whilst holding ink in its reservoir that was delivered to its nib.¹



Quills and Dip Pens – the non-reservoir alternatives

At around the same time that paper made its journey to Europe in the 8th century AD, quill feathers became the most popular writing instrument and remained so for a thousand years. The word pen derives from the Latin word penna meaning 'feather'. Each quill would last for a week and took considerable preparation. It required sharpening with a pen knife and the drying of ink was hastened by a small coal stove under the table.



The 19th century brought about the beginning of the transition from quill pens to steel dip pens. Many of the first dip pen manufacturers were based in the Jewellery Quarter of Birmingham with John Mitchell being credited with the introduction of mass production of steel pens in 1822. By the middle of the 19th century, half of the world's steel dip pens were being produced in Birmingham.

The Jewellery Quarter today boasts The Pen Museum², dedicated to the history and legacy of the city's steel pen industry. Their website asserts;

"During the 19th Century, 75% of everything written in the world was with a 'Birmingham' pen. Birmingham was at the forefront of this trade until it declined in



the 1950s with the invention of the biro and fountain pen. At one time, there were around 100 factories in the Jewellery Quarter area. The development of the steel pen reduced the cost of writing and enabled the spread of literacy throughout the world.”³

The first patented fountain pens

The first fountain pen models also appeared at the start of the 19th century. These were dogged with design flaws, which invariably lead to the ink leaking from the reserve. These early prototypes still made use of a quill nib until gold nibs became more popular. The huge benefit and perhaps impetus behind the early inventors was the advantage of the writer being spared from constantly having to dip the nib for ink. Early patents were issued to Baltimore shoemaker, Peregrin Williamson in 1809 followed by John Scheffer in Britain in 1819. The first self-filling fountain pen was patented in 1813 by John Jacob Parker in 1813.

Lewis Waterman and the motivation to invent a reliable fountain pen



Lewis Waterman was an insurance broker in New York City. In 1883, he was on the verge of securing a lucrative contract with a client. At this time, salesmen would often wear a vest chain (similar to those that secured a pocket watch). The chain would extend into both waistcoat pockets with a metal container of ink at the end of one chain and a foldaway pen holder at the end of the other chain.

Waterman shied away from the vest chain and instead invested in a new reservoir pen with the intention of impressing those he did business with. When the time came for the important contract to be signed, the reservoir pen failed to impress, in fact it failed to write at all, leaving nothing but a significant blob of ink of the contract. The client was unimpressed and left without agreeing to the negotiated business deal whilst Waterman hurried back to his office to try and find another copy of the contract.



Salesman turns Inventor

Lewis Waterman noted that none of the pocket pens or reservoir pens that were available had any mechanism to ensure the control of ink. He travelled to stay with his brother who lived on a farm in upstate New York and set about designing his own feed which could be fitted to a pen, rather than relying on the leaky reservoirs of existing models.

Waterman wanted to make use of capillary attraction in his pens; this meant that air would ensure that ink flowed to the nib at a steadier and therefore more reliable

rate for the writer. This multi-feed approach involved a groove in the feed that would allow for the intake of air at the bottom of the groove and three narrow slits. Bubbles of air would be drawn in and gently force the ink from the barrel through the slits in an even flow to the nib of the pen. The prototype of this ingenious design was first made from the spoke of a wagon wheel, taken from his brother's farm.

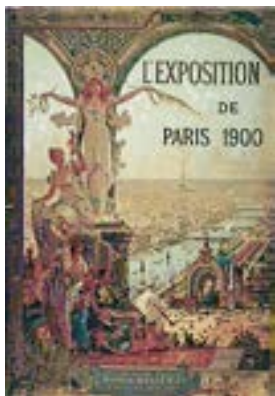
Waterman's first pen was called 'The Regular' and was attractive to look at as well as to write with as it was decorated with wooden accents. It was patented in 1884 and sold from the rear of a cigar shop on the corner of Fulton Street and Nassau Street in New York City for the first year of production. Waterman offered a five year guarantee with his pens and it is believed that he sold four or five pens a week in the first year. He obtained the gold nibs that were tipped with iridium from regular suppliers as these were often used with dip pens available at the time. The parts that were made from vulcanised rubber were manufactured in a factory in Seymour, Connecticut which he would later purchase for the Waterman Pen Company.

From Inventor to Salesman once more

By 1885, Lewis Waterman had moved his pen business from the back of a cigar shop to his own premises on Lower Broadway. Waterman launched an advertising campaign with the company name of the Ideal Pen Company and he was quick to use his salesmanship to develop an extensive marketing strategy that included testimonials for his pens such as;

"It never soils the fingers."

"It is always ready, without pounding or shaking."⁴



Waterman also invested in advertisements for his pens in several popular magazines across the United States including the well-known Review of Reviews Journal. Waterman's company was formally incorporated in 1888 and the following year a factory was opened in Montreal as the catalogue of Waterman pen models increased. At the 1900 Paris Exposition, the company exhibited and were awarded a gold medal for their products.

Lewis Waterman died in 1901 and his nephew, Frank D Waterman took leadership of the company. Sales increased steadily to 350,000 pens a year with the company boasting impressive offices in Manhattan in addition to factories in Connecticut and Montreal.



Offices in Manhattan from 1906

The Battle of the Fillers

Regulating the flow of ink to the nib was a significant achievement in ensuring the success of the fountain pen and was in many ways the making of the Waterman Pen Company. The next challenge was simplifying the messy process of filling the pen with ink. For the first twenty years of production, ink was placed into the fountain pen's barrel with the use of an eyedropper. This invariably caused leakage at both the screwed joint of the barrel and into the cap.

At the turn of the century, internal rubber sacs were introduced into the barrel of the pen and with this came the challenge of inventing the best method for filling these sacs with the necessary ink. Waterman's solution to this problem was the coin filler in 1913. A slot in the barrel of the pen allowed the writer to insert a coin which would compress the sac sufficiently that when the nib was placed into the ink bottle, the coin could be removed and it would draw the ink through the nib into the sac. Other popular variations included the lever filler introduced by Schaeffer and the button filler designed by Parker.



The Roaring Twenties



The success of the coin filler as well as a large product range saw the Waterman Pen Company as the market leader into the 1920s. By this time, the company had subsidiaries in France, the United Kingdom and Canada. The moment in history to epitomise the success of the Waterman Pen Company was the use of a solid gold Waterman pen at the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919⁵, marking the end of the First World War and the establishment of The League of Nations, a global peacekeeping organisation and forerunner to

the United Nations. This unique historical event was later referred to in a Waterman advertisement;

Waterman enters the Ball Point Market

By the 1930s, many of Waterman's contemporaries had evolved their product ranges with new innovations and technical advances. Waterman's reputation had always focused on reliability and quality and they were not as quick to respond to the changing fountain pen market and this had a detrimental effect on their market share. By the mid-1940s, Waterman, like many other fountain pen manufacturers were losing money due to decreasing sales. In 1949, Waterman produced its first ball point pen, known as the Ball Pointer with a retail price of one dollar. The good

reputation of Waterman formed the basis of their marketing strategy with slogans such as;

“Avoid regrets – get famous Waterman’s quality for sure performance”⁶

Waterman appreciated the scepticism of the ball point market customers by pricing the pen at just one dollar compared to the three dollar price tag of the mechanical pencil produced as part of the matching range. By 1953, the Waterman Company felt brave enough to venture into the higher end of the ball point market, with the launch of the Sapphire model which was billed as the ‘ world’s largest selling jewel point pen’.⁷ The Sapphire featured a synthesised diamond point and was priced at \$10 for which the customer received not only the pen but an additional



gift item such as a wallet. In 1955 Waterman launched the Cartridge Filler fountain pen which was also known as the CF and was one of Waterman’s most successful products. The CF pen was one of the first to make use of a plastic ink cartridge and was manufactured in the United States and Canada until the company’s sale in 1958.

The Waterman – Bic Partnership

Whilst the Waterman Pen Company was struggling to adjust to the dwindling popularity of fountain pens in favour of ball point pens, Marcel Bich of France was enjoying phenomenal success with his cheap and reliable ball point pen in Europe.



Bich had begun his career as a production manager for an ink company before establishing his own company manufacturing parts for mechanical pencils and fountain pens in Paris in 1945. As the first ball point pen models emerged after the Second World War, Bich expanded his business to include the manufacture of plastic barrels for the new disposable pens. By 1949, Bich had designed his own disposable ball point pen which retailed for just 19 cents compared to the early models in the United States which sold for over 10 dollars. Unlike many of the early models sold in North America, Bich’s design did not suffer from leakage and clog-

ging problems and by 1955, annual sales in Europe were in excess of \$5 million.

Bich's success in the United States took longer than expected as the American public were suspicious of any advertising claims about the success of ball point pens. At this time, the Paper Mate Company stood alone as one of the only companies to produce a reliable and relatively low cost ball point pen. Bich needed to find a brand name that was already trusted by the American people and a reverse merger with the Waterman Pen Company in 1958 provided a solution to this problem.

In 1958, Bich made an offer to purchase 60% of Waterman for \$1 million. Once Marcel Bich became fully aware of the financial affairs of the Waterman Pen Company, he was able to acquire the remaining 40% of the company at no additional cost. The company was renamed the Waterman-Bic Corporation so as to gain maximum benefit for Bich as he attempted to secure a foothold in the American ball point pen market. The Waterman-Bic Corporation established its headquarters in Milford, Connecticut close to the former headquarters of Waterman in Seymour, Connecticut. By the mid-1960s, Bic had sold off the older operation and ceased to manufacture Waterman pens. It is reported that when the Waterman managers tried to persuade Marcel Bich to produce a ball point pen to rival the successful Paper Mate models at a higher price than the 29 cent Bic ball point he reportedly replied;

"Waterman is 100% mine. You are going to do what you are told."⁸

By 1971, the Waterman reputation had served its purpose in bringing the Bic name and product range to the forefront of the American pen market and the Waterman-Bic Corporation was renamed the Bic Pen Corporation.

Waterman moves to France



Subsidiaries of the Waterman Pen Company had existed in Europe since the height of their success in the 1920s. Jules Isidor Fagard established a French subsidiary known as JIF Waterman in 1926. By 1936, JIF Waterman were selling Waterman pens with ink cartridges made of glass. Whilst these were manufactured in the United States, it is thought

that the American Waterman division may have wanted to test out their feasibility in Europe before launching a cartridge pen at home.⁹ JIF Waterman, led by Fagard and his wife Elsa, are credited for ensuring the continuation of the Waterman product range and name following the merger of the North American division in 1958.

Gillette Purchases Waterman

The astute leadership of the Fagard husband and wife team had safeguarded Waterman's market share and reputation as a manufacturer of quality writing instruments. By the mid-1980s, the American giant, Gillette, who had already purchased the Paper Mate Company in 1955, expressed an interest in purchasing Waterman. The Director General of Waterman, Francine Gomez, sought assurances from Gillette that both manufacturing and design of the Waterman product range would remain in France and a deal was reached in 1985. By 1988, Francine Gomez had resigned as Director General and president of Waterman as Gillette instigated plans to sell Waterman pens in office discount stores such as Staples;

"To her that was sacrilege, like peddling Rolls Royces fender to fender with Fords."¹⁰

Despite Gomez' objections, it was a successful strategy that contributed to a quadrupling of earnings for Gillette in their stationery products division between 1986 and 1988. In 1992, Gillette added to their pen company portfolio with the purchase of the Parker Pen Company for \$485 million.

Waterman and the Future

In 2000, Newell Rubbermaid purchased the Gillette portfolio of writing products which included Parker, Waterman, Paper Mate and the Liquid Paper brands. They are now the global leader in writing instruments also owning brands such as Sharpie who are the number one brand of writing instruments in the United States. Newell Rubbermaid now produce just 47 writing instruments as part of the Waterman range with approximately the same number of products in each of three categories; fountain pens, ball point pens and roller ball pens.

Waterman is recognised as the oldest manufacturer of fountain pens, still in existence today, 130 years after Lewis Waterman received his first patent following the loss of that vital business contract. From the humble beginnings of one salesman fashioning a reliable pen feed from a wagon wheel spoke in a country farm in the 1880s to a prominent position in the portfolio of the global leader in the writing instrument, the enduring tale of Waterman is one of triumph over adversity and dogged determination to produce a superior writing instrument.

1 C E Bosworth, A Mediaeval Islamic Prototype of the Fountain Pen? Published in the Journal of Semitic Studies, 1981, located at : <http://jss.oxfordjournals.org/content/26/2/229.extract#>

2 More information about the Pen Museum can be found at: <http://www.penroom.co.uk/>

3 Quotation taken from <http://www.jewelleryquarter.net/visit/museums/the-pen-museum/>



- 4 Lewis Waterman testimonials quoted in A Lief's article He Found A Way published in Mechanix Illustrated, Sept 1954, located at: http://blog.modernmechanix.com/mags/MechanixIllustrated/9-1954/watermans_pen/watermans_pen_0.jpg
- 5 The use of a Waterman pen at the Treaty of Versailles is cited in several articles including: <http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/blwaterman.htm>
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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waterman_pens

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fountain_pens



Fountain Pens: A Short History

Haywards Heath & District Probus Club



The Inspiration

I was inspired to put this history together after seeing the restoration of an old Wyvern fountain pen on *The Repair Shop* TV programme. My researches revealed a wealth of interesting information. I hope you enjoy it.

The main flaw with quills and pens with no ink reservoir is that they must be constantly dipped in ink to write or draw. Because of that, they can very easily stain the surface on which they write. The fountain pen is the first solution for these problems. It has a reservoir in its body that holds water-based liquid ink for writing. This ink passes through a feed to the nib under the influence of gravity and capillary action. A fountain pen can be filled with ink in different ways, depending on how it is built: with a pipette or syringe, with its own filling mechanism that works like a piston or by placing a cartridge filled with ink inside its body. Some rare models hold ink tablets that are dissolved in water and then poured into the fountain pen.

Timeline

The earliest mention of a pen with an ink reservoir is from the year 973. Ma'ād al-Mu'izz, the caliph of the Maghreb region of Northwest Africa, asked for a pen that, when used, would keep his hands clean and would not leave as much mess as standard pens and quills of the day. His wish was fulfilled with a pen that held ink inside and which could be held upside-down without spilling, but we don't know precisely how this pen worked or even what it looked like.

There is some evidence that a working fountain pen was constructed and used during the Renaissance by artist and inventor Leonardo da Vinci.



The next mention of a pen with an inner reservoir came from the 17th century when German inventor Daniel Schwenter invented a pen made from two quills: one quill was placed inside the other; it held the ink and was closed with a cork. Ink left the reservoir through a small hole which led to a nib.

Samuel Pepys (1633 - 1703) is famous for his diaries, but he also enjoyed a successful career as a naval administrator and member of parliament. He mentioned a metal pen "to carry ink" in his writings.

Close-up of traditional fountain pen with an iridium nib. Licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International](#) license.

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In the 19th century, standard pens were improved with the mass production of cheap steel pen nibs. After centuries of writing with quills dipped in ink, people in the 1800s began embracing fountain pens with internal ink reservoirs filled using an eyedropper. In 1827, Romanian inventor Petrache Poenaru received a patent from the French government for a fountain pen with a barrel made from a large swan quill. In America in 1848, Azel Storrs Lyman patented a fountain pen with a *'method of supplying ink to pens from a reservoir in the handle'*.

These were not the only patents for fountain pens of that time, but they needed three inventions to become popular: an iridium-tipped gold nib, hard rubber, and free-flowing ink (early fountain pens didn't understand the role that air pressure plays in the operation of pens). The first fountain pen to have all this was made in the 1850s.

By 1888, Waterman, a former insurance salesman, was selling 5,000 pens a year. Sales took off and climbed to 1,000 pens a day by the time of his death in 1901. In 1905, the company became the first pen manufacturer to rivet a clip onto its pen caps to be easily carried right side up in a pocket. Two years later, the Waterman company introduced a "safety" fountain pen that could be carried in any position, even upside down, without spilling any of its ink. Until 1908, fountain pens tended to leak because they didn't have an airtight cap. The *Waterman safety pen*, incorporating a screw-on cap and an inner cap providing a seal around the nib, neatly solved this problem.

The game-changer

Many fountain pen companies were doing reasonably well financially until 1938 when a Hungarian Laszlo Biro inventor introduced his solution to avoid messy hands: the biro. It had a profound effect on the fountain pen industry, such that today, fountain pens are often treated as luxury goods and sometimes as status symbols.

A Parker pen is one of the go-to brands when it comes to fountain pens, but they are not alone. The Swiss-made Caran d'Ache Ecrivor takes some beating with its wow factor, amazing handling and characteristically Teutonic attention to detail. Another one to look out for is the Kingsman edition of Conway Stewart's Churchill pen.

There are numerous manufacturers to choose from. There now follows a brief storyline about a selection of British and foreign fountain pen companies. Some companies are not mentioned - such as Wordsworth & Black, Pelikan, Ingram, Aurora, Faber-Castell, and Visconti. I am sure there may be more, and I apologise for any omissions.

Conway Stewart

Conway Stewart & Company Ltd is a British former manufacturing company of writing implements, founded in 1905 by entrepreneurs Frank Jarvis and Thomas Garner in London. They took a great risk in leaving their secure jobs to start a new enterprise reselling fountain pens made by other manufacturers and imported pens from the United States. The company became notable for its fountain pens, although, later on, it also produced ballpoint pens. The 1950s provided the last of the great Conway Stewart models. The company stagnated through the 1960s as the market turned relentlessly towards the disposable ballpoint. The company persevered in trying to keep up with the market trends with their ballpoint pen and also by launching the 106, a cartridge pen mounted with a semi-hooded nib. In the 1960s, the company was sold and relocated to Wales, from where the last pen rolled off their production floor in 1975. Conway Stewart was placed in receivership in 2014, with its stocks and assets acquired by Bespoke British Pens Limited. Since then, it has owned the rights to the brand and now sells a wide range of fountain pens under the "Conway Stewart" name.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and The Duke of Edinburgh were presented with two Conway Stewart pens from "The Gold Collection" to mark their Golden Wedding Anniversary. British Prime Minister Tony Blair presented Russian President Putin with a Conway Stewart Churchill Burgundy Fountain pen on a state visit to Russia, and French President Jacques Chirac was given a Brown Marble Churchill to celebrate his 70th birthday in 2002. Conway Stewart was the official pen chosen by the British Government for the G8 Summit, at which Prime Minister Blair presented a Conway Stewart No 58 set to each of the G8 world leaders. President Bush and President Clinton both owned Conway Stewart pens.

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British Pens and Cumberland Pencils/Williams Mitchell

Joseph Gillott was a Sheffield-based working cutler. In 1821, he moved to Birmingham, where he found employment in the steel toy trade, the technical name for the manufacture of steel buckles, chains and light ornamental steel-work. In about 1830, he turned his attention to the manufacture of steel pens by machinery, and in 1831 patented a process for placing elongated points on pen nibs. He also devised improved modes of preparing the metal for the action of the press, tempering, cleansing, and polishing, and, in short, many little details of manufacture necessary to give them the required flexibility to enable them to compete with the quill pen.

In 1920, Hinks Wells & Co and William Mitchell came together at the Pedigree Works in Birmingham and founded a new company called *British Pens*, which added *Cumberland Pencils* in 1921. After World War II, they began to produce ballpoint pens. In 1961, British Pens acquired the pen businesses of Perry & Co. and other manufacturers like John Mitchell and Joseph Gillott. As part of the Twinlock Group, its name was changed to *Cumberland Graphics* in 1975. Byron Head, of William Mitchell, acquired British Pens in 1982, renaming it *William Mitchell Ltd*. The company still makes pens in the West Midlands and is now part of *The Rical Group*, a privately owned group of manufacturing companies specialising in the subcontract manufacture of pressed and die-casted metal components.

Wyvern Pen Company



Picture Credit: "George V purchasing a Wyvern Redwing in Holborn, circa 1925" by lester pendragon is marked with CC PDM 1.0

The Wyvern Pen Company was named after the winged, two-legged dragon with a barbed tail that appears in the city's coat-of-arms. Production at the Vulcanite Works began as far back as 1896 and continued until the company's demise in 1955. Despite being one of the oldest British pen companies, and producing a variety of high-quality pens, Wyvern does not have a strong following these days. From the 1880s onwards, the company went through various stages of development, importing pens, buying them in from outside contractors, assembling pens from parts and finally going into full production. By the late 1920s, they had their own nib plant, and as well as producing their own-branded nibs bearing the Wyvern logo, they made nibs for other manufacturers.

You may have bought a Wyvern without realising it, as they made pens for other companies and produced a great many promotional pens.

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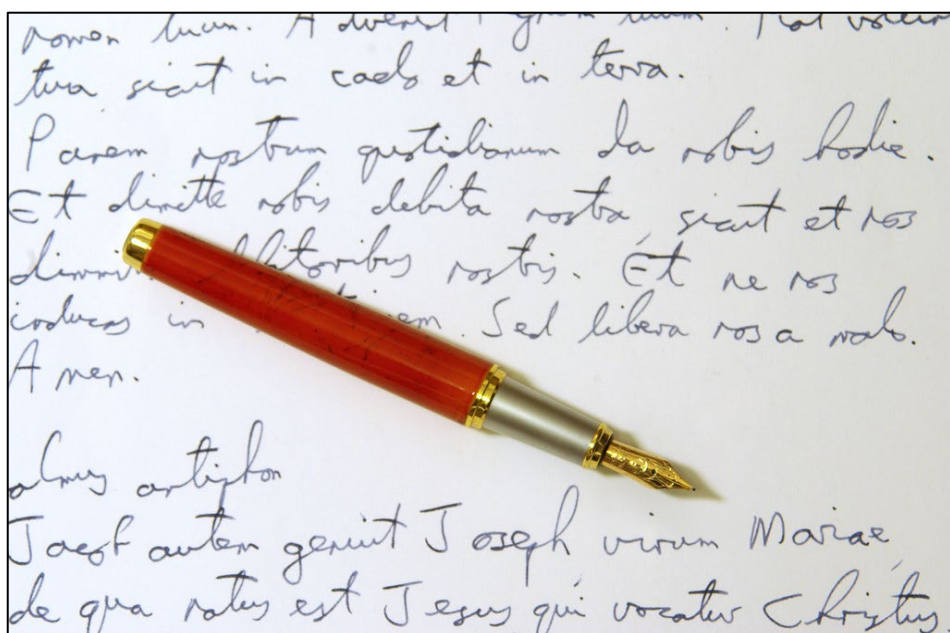
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Mentmore/Platignum

Mentmore pens were made in Hackney, in the east end of London, between the 1920s and the mid-1950s. They were attractive, exceptionally well-made, and were very popular, especially immediately post-war to the mid-1950s. Mentmore also manufactured for several other distributors using the brand name *Spot*.

Mentmore Manufacturing Company started life in 1919 and was named after its first premises in Mentmore Terrace, Hackney. The company was an innovator - it invented the first self-filling fountain pen, the retractable ballpoint pen, the felt tip pen and the spy pens in 1939. In 1925, the first replacement nib unit was developed - a revolution in pen design.

The *Platignum* name was introduced, and the slogan 'As good as gold', reflecting the use of stainless steel for the first time, came into being. Around the same time, Mentmore started to use the name *Platignum Pen Company*, and products carrying the brand name *Platignum* were introduced. In 1981, the business changed its name to *Platignum*. After various acquisitions of its own, the business itself was acquired by Adare Printing Group in 1997.¹ A British Classic, *Platignum* took a brief break from production but was relaunched in 2007 – to much applause from all.



Picture Credit: "Mentmore Regent fountain pen" by Athanasius is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Montblanc



Picture Credit: "Montblanc Pen" by Johnson Watch Co is marked with CC0 1.0

Inspired by the mechanical innovations he witnessed during his travels to America, German technician August Eberstein teamed up with Hamburg merchant Alfred Nehemias and entrepreneur Claus Johannes Voss to bring his ideas to life. The business (initially trading as the *Simplo Filler Pen Co*) produced a line of writing instruments with non-leaking technology that would change writing history forever, thus laying the foundations for *Montblanc*, the internationally renowned luxury marque for fountain pens. The business created an early premium-quality writing instrument, with a sliding barrel filler named *Rouge et Noir* around 1909, followed by ten different safety pens between 1911 and 1916. In 1910, following changes to the team, the *Montblanc* name was adopted for the growing company, inspired by the highest mountain in Europe that would symbolise the founders' vision of excellence and their pursuit of performance, innovation and the finest craftsmanship. The six-point white star, representing the six snow-covered glaciers of the majestic mountain, would become the company's emblem and has been featured on every *Montblanc* writing instrument ever since.²

¹ Source: Graces Guide to British Industrial History, [HERE](#).

² Source: Cult Pens, [HERE](#).

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Onoto

Onoto is a British brand of luxury fountain pens and accessories. Initially manufactured by the printing giant De La Rue from 1905 until 1958, the brand was relaunched as "The Onoto Pen Company Limited", based in Coney Hall, London in 2005. De La Rue had manufactured fountain pens for most of the later part of the 19th century. In 1881, it produced the *Anti-Stylograph*, pre-dating Lewis Waterman's first pen by three years. The Onoto pen was invented in 1905 by George Sweetser, a mechanical engineer (as well as being a roller-skating champion and a famous female impersonator on the vaudeville circuit), who offered his invention to Evelyn De La Rue – the eldest son of Thomas De La Rue – who immediately accepted. Shortly afterwards, De La Rue launched a self-filling fountain pen that was guaranteed not to leak because it had a cut-off valve. The writing instrument, called the *Onoto Patent Self-filling Pen*, also had a patented "plunger filler" system that drew ink into the pen using a vacuum created by the down-stroke of a piston. In 1915 De La Rue launched the Onoto Valveless. The Onoto ink pencil and the *Onoto Safety 'Receder'* (with retractable nib) followed in 1921.



Picture Credit: "Onoto 12" by penmanila is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

While Sweetser carried on skating into his 80s, *Onoto the Pen* gradually developed from the original black chased vulcanite model into its stylish marbled acrylic and resin versions. By the 1920s, the range had grown into a vivid collection of distinct fountain pens with a global reputation. In 1958, pen production moved to Australia.

Since the closure of the original De la Rue factory, there has been a loyal following for Onoto pens among collectors and connoisseurs of fine writing instruments. Many original Onoto pens have been resold for many times their original price. In May 2005, a new company named The Onoto Pen Company was launched on the London Stock Exchange. It has introduced many limited-edition historical collections of fountain pens made in Britain. The company now exists to preserve the traditional craftsmanship techniques of pen-masters.

Numerous notable people have used Onoto pens throughout history, including Field Marshal Douglas Haig and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Other famous names include Florence Nightingale, Edgar Wallace and Natsume Soseki, the foremost Japanese novelist of Emperor Meiji era (1868-1912).³

Parker Pen Company

The Parker Pen Company is an American manufacturer of luxury pens, founded in 1888 by George Safford Parker in Janesville, Wisconsin, United States. In 2011, the Parker factory at Newhaven, East Sussex, England, was closed, and its production was transferred to Nantes, France.

George Parker had previously been a John Holland Gold Pen Company sales agent. He received his first fountain pen-related patent in 1889. In 1894, Parker had received a patent on his *Lucky Curve* fountain pen feed, which was claimed to draw excess ink back into the pen barrel when the pen was not in use. The company's first successful pen, released in 1899, was the Parker *Jointless*. The *Lucky Curve* feed was used in various forms until 1928. From the 1920s to the 1960s, before the development of the ballpoint pen, Parker was either number one or number two in worldwide writing instrument sales. In 1931, Parker created *Quink* (quick drying ink), eliminating the necessity for blotting. In 1941, the company developed the most widely used model of fountain pen in history (over \$400 million worth of sales in its 30-year history), the Parker 51. In 1954, Parker released the *Jotter* ballpoint pen with its original nylon body and inverted "V" clip. The *Jotter* would sell over 750 million units during its history. In 1955, the company introduced its *Liquid Lead* pencil, which used liquid graphite to write like a pen.

³ The Onoto history is largely compiled from Wikipedia, [HERE](#).

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Picture Credit: "Parker Pens" by Kaptain Kobold is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Unfortunately, the *Scripto* company had introduced a similar product called *Fluidlead* a few months previously. To avoid a costly patent fight, the companies agreed to share their formulas. A management buyout in 1986 moved the company's headquarters to Newhaven, East Sussex, which was the original location of the Valentine Pen Company previously acquired by Parker. A succession of sales and purchases followed, culminating in Parker abandoning its traditional retail outlets in North America to move the Parker line to upscale "luxury" retailers.⁴

Sheaffer

today Sheaffer Pen Corporation is a manufacturer of writing instruments, particularly luxury fountain pens. The company was founded by Walter A. Sheaffer in Fort Madison, Iowa, USA and incorporated in 1913 to exploit his invention of a lever-filling fountain pen.

Starting as a backroom business with only seven employees, the company has grown into a top designer and manufacturer of writing instruments and creative tools. In 1907, Walter Sheaffer used his prior expertise as a jeweller and aimed to create a device that would allow users to fill a pen with ink much easier, cleaner and aesthetically pleasing than was then available. In 1912, he dedicated his life savings to his idea of a pen-filling apparatus that initiates a lever system. By the 1930s, Sheaffer pens had solidified itself as a leader in the luxury pen market. The fountain pens were advertised as the pen that "fills instantly from any ink-well, with one touch of a finger." In 2014, Sheaffer Pen Company was purchased by AT Cross, and it has continued to grow and adapt to the changing market while holding fast to the original principles of its founder.

When George H Walker Bush was inaugurated as the 41st President of the United States, a friend presented him with a Sheaffer sterling silver Nostalgia fountain pen engraved with the initials GHWB.⁵



Picture Credit: "Sheaffer's Pen-Pencil, c. 1920s." by Halloween HJB is marked with CC0 1.0

⁴ The Parker Pen history is largely compiled from Wikipedia, [HERE](#).

⁵ The Sheaffer Pen history is largely compiled from Sheaffer, [HERE](#).

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Waterman

The Waterman Pen Company is a major manufacturing company of luxury fountain pens based in Paris. It was established in 1884 in New York by Lewis Edson Waterman and is one of the few remaining first-generation fountain pen companies. Since 2000, it has been owned by the American group Newell Brands subsidiary Sanford L.P.

From the beginning, competition in the fountain pen industry was fierce, both in the marketplace and the courtroom. Despite later company literature that depicts Lewis E. Waterman as a golden-hearted innocent, all evidence indicates that he was a tough, savvy, and innovative businessman. In 1899, the L.E. Waterman Company developed the "spoon Feed" system, which prevented ink overflow. It led to the company receiving the gold medal of excellence at the "Exposition Universelle" in Paris in 1900.



Picture Credit: "Refill Waterman" by racatumba is licensed under CC BY 2.0

After L.E. Waterman's death in 1901, the company really took off. Under the leadership of Waterman's nephew, Frank D. Waterman, the Waterman Pen Company expanded aggressively worldwide. While Waterman introduced its share of innovations, the company's main selling point was always quality and reliability. In 1905, Waterman patented their first permanently attached pen clip, allowing a pen to be held directly in a pocket. In 1908, Waterman released their first retractable-nib "safety" pen.

As the 20th century wore on, Waterman's conservatism allowed its younger and more innovative competitors to gain market share—Parker, Sheaffer, and Wahl-Eversharp in particular. By the later 1920s, Waterman attempted to catch up; it continued to struggle through and beyond World War II before finally shutting down in 1954. Waterman's French subsidiary, Waterman-JIF (Jules-Isidore Fagard), later Waterman S.A., continued to prosper and eventually absorbed the remaining parts of the American company and its British arm. Early Waterman pens were made of hard rubber and were equipped with 14K gold nibs. From early on, precious metal trim and overlays were offered. Many are still in use today, and their nibs are prized for their smoothness and flexibility.⁶

Caran d'Ache

Picture Credit: "Caran d'Ache 849" by Scrively is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



Caran d'Ache is Switzerland's sole manufacturer of pencils, fine-arts materials and luxury writing instruments, and the symbol of technical excellence, precision, reliability and innovation. Made in workshops in Geneva since 1915, each design combines expertise, superior quality and recognised know-how. Elegance, refinement and creativity for outstanding products to give you a unique drawing, painting and writing experience.

The company was established as "Fabrique Genevoise de Crayons" in Geneva in 1915 when Arnold Schweizer purchased the Ecridor Pencil Factory. When Arnold Schweizer took over the company in 1924, he renamed it after Caran d'Ache, the nickname of the French satiric political cartoonist Emmanuel Poiré (who in turn took his name from карандаш (karandash), the Russian word for pencil). In 1974, the company moved its production to Thonex, a municipality of the Canton of Geneva. The company has been known to include precious diamonds in the pens, and for that, in 1999, the *Modernista Diamonds* pen was included in the Guinness Book of Records as "the most expensive pen in the world".⁷

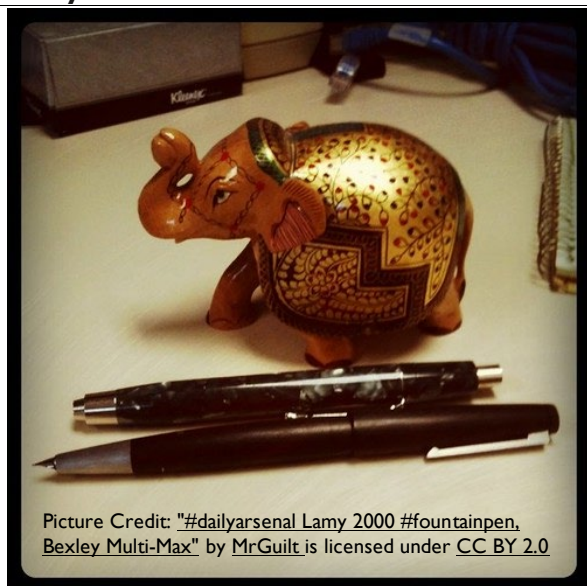
⁶ The Waterman Pen history is largely compiled from Wikipedia, [HERE](#).

⁷ The Caran d'Ache Pen history is largely compiled from Wikipedia, [HERE](#).

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Lamy

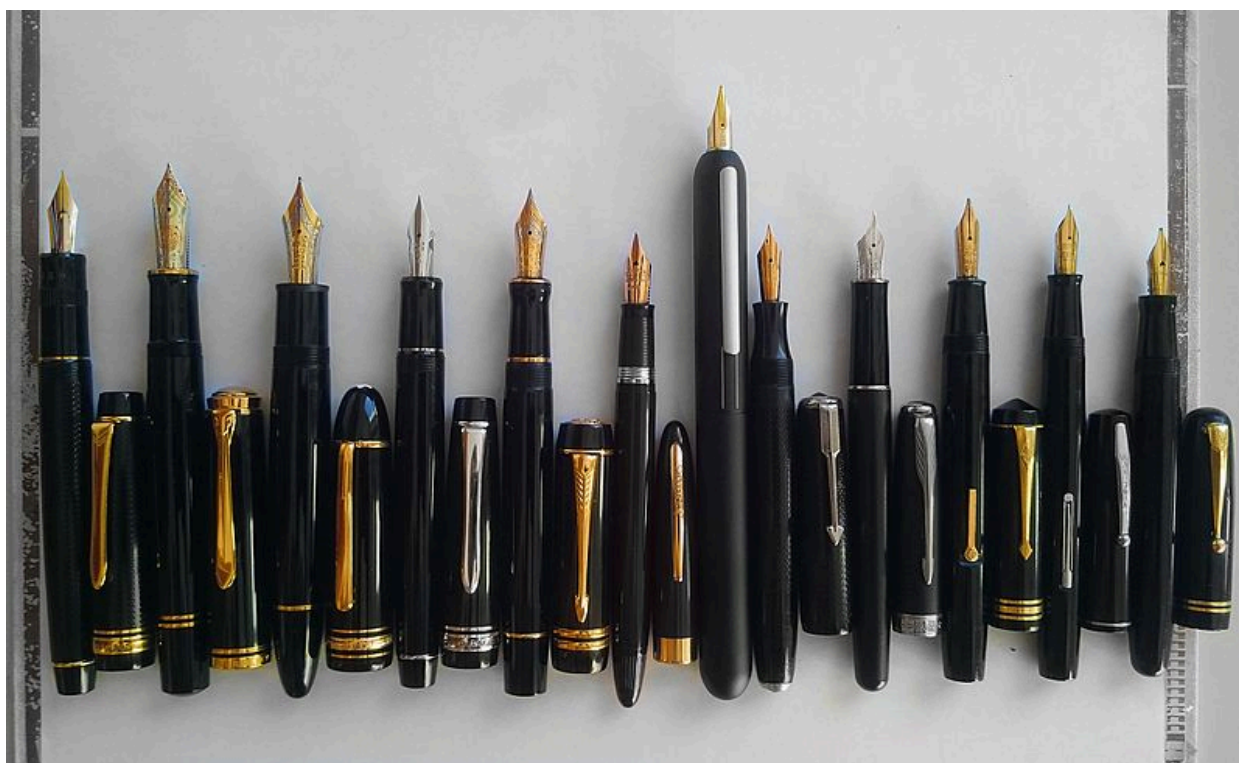


Picture Credit: "#dailyarsenal Lamy 2000 #fountainpen, Bexley Multi-Max" by MrGuilt is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

The family business of Lamy was started by C Joseph Lamy in Heidelberg (as the Orthos Füllfederhalter-Fabrik) in 1930 and is still operating as an independent family firm in Heidelberg today. Up until then, Lamy had worked as an export and branch manager for an American writing instrument manufacturer (Parker). Lamy was a pioneer in the use of moulded synthetic plastics to make their products.

The LAMY 27 fountain pen, which with its innovative *Tintomatik* system ensured a smooth, clean flow of ink, symbolised the birth of the Lamy writing instrument brand and achieved the firm's breakthrough on the market in 1952. In 1957, the company moved to its present location in the Heidelberg district of Wieblingen. In autumn 1966, the LAMY 2000 was launched. This new fountain pen is revolutionary in several respects: unlike writing instruments from other brands, it featured no material surplus or design gadgets. Based on the Bauhaus principle (*form follows function*) it focuses on practical

function and thus lays the foundation for the clear design language which still forms the basis for all Lamy writing instruments. The Lamy design ethos can be seen in all of their ranges, from the *abc* children's pencil through to the *dialog3*, the world's only retractable fountain pen with a retractable clip. Lamy has won more international design awards than any other writing instrument maker. Innovative design is matched by high production values, resulting in products which are a joy to own and use, year after year.⁸



Picture: Author: Ilkin Santak Licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International](#) license.

From left to right: 1. Pilot Justus 95 (14k gold F nib), 2. Pelikan Souverän M1000 (18k gold F nib), 3. Montblanc Meisterstück 149 (18k gold M nib), 4. Pilot Heritage 912 (14k gold FA nib), 5. Parker Duofold Centennial (18k gold F nib), 6. Sheaffer Snorkel Admiral (14k gold F nib), 7. Lamy Dialog 3 (14k gold F nib), 8. Welty (14k gold F nib), 9. Parker Sonnet (18k gold F nib), 10. Conway Stewart 55 (14k gold M Duro nib), 11. Waterman Thorobred (14k gold F nib), 12. Mabie Todd Swan 3220 (14k gold M nib)

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⁸ The Lamy Pen history is excerpted from Lamy, [HERE](#) and Wikipedia, [HERE](#).

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Sources

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- <http://www.penmuseum.co.uk/master/I.I.htm>

Links to Further Information

A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alfred Dunhill, Ltd.• Aurora (pen manufacturer)	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Macniven and Cameron• Meisterstück• Montblanc (company)• Montegrappa
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ballograf• Société Bic• Birmingham pen trade	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Namiki
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Caran d'Ache (company)• John W. Carter• Richard B. Carter• Carter's Ink Company• Cartier (jeweller)• Chelpark• Conway Stewart• A. T. Cross Company• Curtis Australia	O	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ohto• OMAS• Onoto pens
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• S. T. Dupont• Deli (company)	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parker Pen Company• Pelikan• Pilot (pen company)
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Esterbrook	Q	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quink
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Faber-Castell• Fountain pen• The Fountain Pen Shop	R	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rotring
G	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graf von Faber-Castell	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shanghai Hero Pen Company• Sheaffer
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Charles Henry Ingersoll	T	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tombow
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L	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lamy	W	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waterman Pen Company• Samuel D. Wonders
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